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No precise explanation can be offered for student uprisings at colleges and universities, but a sense of social purpose seems to pervade these disruptive activities. A college education, once a matter of free choice, is now a twentieth-century imperative for social and economic mobility. Modern students, frustrated by the inescapability of the college experience, observe such anomalies as poverty amidst wealth; war-related activities of a university that denounces war; the ugly reality of racism and professional rhetoric about human unity and dignity; and professors for whom students are not a primary concern, and have decided that middle-aged adults are the culpable parties for the current state of affairs. The use of repressive administrative power should be replaced with more patience, firmness, decisiveness, and participatory campus democracy to establish a cohesive institutional climate that is not conducive to student unrest. Teaching arrangements are needed which provide a sense of intimacy and shared purpose for students and faculty, such as short-term, problem-oriented interdisciplinary institutes. Students would then be able to alternate periods of learning and independent study, and professors could alternate intensive teaching and the study, research, and consulting demanded of them by contemporary society. (WM)

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Dean Robert J. Schaefer

Address

Campus Unrest and Exhausted Administrators

July 7, 1969

I'm not wholly clear any administrator from Columbia University - that now internationally infamous fountainhead of revolution, confrontation, conflict and irrationality - should have been imposed upon for what otherwise promises to be rational deliberations. Obviously, since Berkeley and Columbia started all this madness, the least that their deans can do is to keep quiet. But perhaps, Carroll intended me as an automated audio-visual aid - a living example of a new, but rapidly multiplying form of educational casualty. If so, you may examine my scars at close range. Or perhaps, I'm meant to serve as a warning to your futures - that the battered and bewildered spectacle which I present foretells a condition which awaits most of you. If so, take a gook look, for it is apparent that the unrest and turmoil which Columbia experienced either has been or will be replicated in some fashion not only in other colleges and universities, but in most secondary schools across the nation. Or perhaps, as an introduction to the theme of your conference - Unrest, Student, Staff and Community - I'm expected to make sense out of our highly publicized ordeal at Columbia. If so, you might just as well go home or go over to the Faculty Club for a drink since I still don't know what happened.

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I can speculate about it, of course, but while I can be reasonably confident of the accuracy of particular observations, I can't be at all sure that, collectively, they describe or explain what in truth transpired. You will hear with me, I trust in an admittedly partial account. My frame of reference is primarily what happened at the University as a whole and not at Teachers College - which was, happily, a somewhat different story. From time to time I'll interject speculations about differences in the T. C. experience.

But let me be completely candid at the outset. If forced to try to explain the rioting, the head-thumpings, the building take-overs, the inchoate rhetoric, and sheer spring madness which incurred, I would have to admit utter befuddlement and could only compare the experience to the Children's Crusade of the thirteenth century. "In 1212," reports the historian Frank M. Stenton, "there took place one of the most ghastly tragedies that has ever happened in the world - the Crusade of the Children. Fifty thousand boys and girls were persuaded by some pertilent dreamers that their childish innocence whould support what their immoral fathers had failed to accomplish, and so left their homes in an expedition to capture the Holy Land. The vast majority never returned; the happiest of them drowned in the Mediterranean." Last spring, too, thousands of your students followed, inexplicably their own Pied Pipers of Morningside Heights. But merely to take note of the comparison, I confess, is to offer no explanation of the Columbia crusade.

You're not forcing me to admit mystification, however, and I can suggest possibly contributing factors. Of foremost importance, I believe, is the present <u>inescapability of the college experience</u>. When most of us were enrolled as undergraduates we represented a minority, and we imagined it was our free choice, or our luck, or if our egos insisted, our superiority, which enabled us to be students. We felt perfectly free to leave if we wished, because it was clear that there was nothing inevitable about the experience. Finishing college was not the sine qua non which it now is for entry into adult economic and social worlds. It's amazing how much infringement of liberty, prolongation of adolescence, and imposition of parietal rules which we could tolerate - secure in the knowledge that we could get out safely and painlessly whenever we chose.

Not so the poor fettered students of today. Every youngster, except some in the ghetto who refuse to hear the message, knows full well that college is inevitably if he would survive. Or if he doesn't know it, he has swallowed the propaganda we educators have spoon fed him that college is a twentieth century imperative. He can't consider leaving voluntarily for to depart, without the magic sheepskin, is to clang shut forever the doors to social and economic mobility. In these days one can't even be employed as a shoe salesman without the certifying diploma. And like all other mammals who feel trapped an cornered, the college student can be dangerous. Periodically, he feels compelled, as do convicts in an Alcatraz, to cleanse himself of frustration by kidnapping a guard, or a Dean, and tearing up the cell blocks. This feeling of entrapment, then - the sure knowledge that society requires his incarceration in a maximum security institution - seems to me a root cause of student unrest.

Even for those young men who, because of family fortune or the natural exuberance which permits a beachcombing career, might forego the twentieth century minimal union card, there is no viable escape. If they break out of Slippery Rock or Yale or Michigan they know they'll only be recaptured by the military academies. Our adventure in Viet Nam and the fact of 2-S status greatly magnifies the sense of encirclement, the feeling of powerlessness in the college experience. And in a predominantly male institution, Columbia students combined hot anger in being imprisoned and cold fear of being let out to face the tighter incarceration of the army.

But it would be misleading to overstress the anomies occasioned by the inescapability of the college experience in modern society. There is also the pervasive sense that the older generation has botched it, and that anyone over thirty has already been hopelessly brainwashed by the establishment. And who is to argue that young

students are not wholly right when they observe the chaos which we have wrought. There is the agonizing irony of poverty and deprivation amidst the capacity and the willingness to blast off billions of dollars in a trip to the moon. The blatant ugliness of racism seems to mock classroom rhetoric and seminar conversation about human unity and human dignity. And everywhere the young see what appears to be fraud and phoniness - in presumed commercial greed for the Strickland cigarette filter, in the apparent hearlessness of the University as a slum landlord, in denouncing war while retaining membership in an Institute for Defense Analysis, in seeming to favor the gymnasium over the inviolability of a public park, and even in Barnard's vacillation in admitting the reality of the pill.

Nowhere is there greater contempt for the wrong-headedness of the middle-aged and greater determination to abandon merely deliberate speed than in the area of race relations. Part of the turmoil at Columbia as well as on campuses throughout the nation seems to be simply an extension of the civil rights movement. A group of blacks, you will recall, occupied Hamilton Hall at Columbia. They were by all odds the most disciplined, the most coldly rational, and ultimately, the least condemned and most admired of the occupying forces. While there was heart-rending vandalism and disorder and lack of central purpose in other oocupied territory, Hamilton Hall was held by a tautly organized expeditionary force. Cleanup details were maintained; there was strict observance of the rights of property and privacy in faculty offices and classrooms. When the police were finally called in to clear the campus, those in Hamilton Hall were the only students to be peaceably and calmly ejected.

Throughout the sit-ins they had contempously refused coalitions with SDS units and had proudly dismissed the official support of H. Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael, and other off-campus militant groups. Furthermore, their demands and their self-discipline in presenting them won the support and grudging admiration of many faculty

members, even the most conservative, and most students even those most opposed to the rebellion. Real and perceived injustices in America's response to the black experience will continue to be a major underlying source of campus disorders. A pervasive sense of guilt among white students encourages a vast tolerance for black students demands.

With their contempt for the obvious inadequacies of the middle-aged is a general and imprecise assurance that things could be put straight if only ther were sufficient will and sufficient action. As one professor of philosophy put it: "They (young people) have exalted notions, because they have not yet been humbled by life or learnt its necessary limitations; moreover, their hopeful disposition makes them think themselves equal to great things - and that means having exalted notions. They would always rather do noble deed than useful ones; their lives are regulated more by moral feeling than by reasoning - all their mistakes are in the direction of doing things excessively and vehemently. They overdo everything - they love too much, hate too much, and the same with everything else." The professor of philosophy whom I quoted does not teach at Columbia; although widely read on the campus, his opinions were written in the 4th century B. C. and his name was Aristotle. But his contentions certainly apply with particular force to our turmoil on Morningside Heights and, I believe, to schools all over the world in 1969.

But there were other factors, too. While adults may have generally made a mess of the world, professors seems particularly culpable. The very success of the modern university - its central importance to the corporate industrial complex and to enhancing the technology - both material and human - which underlies contemporary life seduces the faculty member form his once primary concern with teaching. I don't believe it is so much that the quality of teaching has declined but that other functions - research and consulting - have vastly increased in importance. The jet airplane and the affluent society make it possible, nay inevitable, for professors

to find other intellectual satisfactions beyond those of sharing ideas and systematic reflections with the young. The richness of the professor's contacts in the contemporary world - his experience of diversity, of new realities, and of fresh intellectual adventure - probably encourages better, certainly more knowledgeable, teaching. But the plain, and to the young, ego-deflating fact, is that students are no longer the center of the professor's universe. It is bad enough to feel yourself a prisoner in the collegiate system; it's much worse to realize that your guards have a satisfying life outside the institutional walls. And Columbia professors, as I'm sure you are aware, enjoy more than ordinary opportunity to escape from the ivory towers into the real world.

Then, too, our riots raged in the spring. I don't believe the contribution of the season - the ebullient spirit of pure mischief - can be ignored. Columbia College students have traditionally frolicked in the spring. Perhaps there is something particularly repressive about the grayness of winter in a great urban metropolis. In earlier years young men commandeered subway trains, ripped down Barnard fences, and staged sit-down stikes amidst Broadway traffic. This is not at all to suggest that our spring turmoil was the 1968 version of a panty raid, but only to take note that for some, at least, the whole frightfully sobering, debacle was just plain fun.

Given these and many other potentially explosive factors in the contemporary educational world, ther is constant danger of riotous outbreaks. The situation breeds small groups of the particularly alienated - an outraged and articulate radical minority. It also spawns many individuals and small groups - I'm still referring to numerically insignificant quantities - who seek greater student power and influence and revised organizational structure to reform the perceived evils of the institutions. Such groups engage in a continuous and never-flagging effort to arouse the uncommitted masses os tudents. Ordinarily, their activities merely add color and reduce the level

of normal boredom. Occasionally, as at Columbia in April - June, 1968, there is a fatal juxtaposition of event, accident, and sheer blunder suggicient to awaken the latent hostilities of the total community.

I do not believe, and certainly events at San Francisco State, Brandeis University, New York University, and many other colleges and universities, affirm the conviction, that any educational institution is free of possible conflagration. Furthermore, I am afraid that we already have seen and will soon witness instances of the same order if not degree, in secondary schools.

After all, the same basic factors are involved. I have throughout my life been amazed by the docility of students in the lower schools. Despite the adolescent's need for physical movement and for self expression he has, at least until now, been willing to sit passively in classrooms five to six consecutive hours daily and to tolerate the dreariness of an imposed curriculum and an enforced conformity. Teaching is on the average at least as dull, I suspect, as that which prevails in the college; what is worse, there are more hours of it. Student government, where is exists at all, is more likely to be the supine creature of the administration than even in the most benighted university. The high school student views the same incoherent adult world as does his counterpart in the college, and he faces the same threat of imminent induction into the armed services.

Moreover, fashion developed in the college have ordinarily found their way to expression in the lower schools. Indeed, there have already been building take-overs in Cincinnati, Ohio, Mt. Vernon, New York, and sporadically and violently in New York City and in many other states. You who are meeting here, I'm afraid, can not afford to be bemused with our predicament in the university, but must grid yourselves for your own revolution.

What, if anything, is to be done about it? Again I must confess ignorance and bewilderment, but I do have a few suggestions born of experience to offer. In the

first place I urge you not to dismiss these whirlwinds as simply the hot air generated by a few radical malcontents. Bitterness and frustration and their latent destructive power exist among most students. Certainly here, it is the general situation within our society and within our institutions which breeds the radical few and not the other way around. The Mark Rudds of the world don't create dissension and mistrust - they simply exploit it. To imagine they are the cause is to assign them far greater malevolent power than their intelligence and capabilities warrant.

Our job as administrators is to seek to prevent the radical's capture of the uncommitted majority. We must be more imaginative, more disciplined, more insightful more patient and more resistant to exhaustion than those who would turn discontent into riot and spring mischief into spring fury. Above all, we must discipline whatever inclination we may feel to be merely repressive. To use administrative power cavalierly is to invite support and sympathy of the many for those against whom our ire may be directed. Let me explain by example. How do you respond to this exerpt from a document found in the men's room of Low Library following the police removal of revolutionary students from the building:

> "Look, there are certain truths that no one can deny. Everybody is created good and beautiful and equal. So we're as great as anybody else in this sick culture, and probably a hell of a lot better. Second, everybody has their rights, lots of them, and no one on earth, not even a professor or a mother, has any business interfering with any of them. Among these is the right to Life, a big, full, beautiful life - without middle-class hangups like money, responsibility, examinations and grades, the Puritan ethic, military service and pressures. Another is Liberty, the right to come and go as you please, whenever you please, without the government manipulators, crummy businessmen,

religious spooks, uptight parents, the CIA, the sadistic cops, and the really out-of-it college Administrators imposing their totaletarianism. Also, there is the pursuit of Happiness, the moral right to have a fun time, to blow your mind, to sleep around, to turn on, however and whenever you like - so long as you don't interfere with anybody else.

Now it's only because you sometimes have to protect these rights from right-wing idiots and jocks that governments have any right to exist at all. But politicians and everybody in authority must be totally and at every minute responsible to the people in the streets and the students. That's where all power comes from. As soon as government, or authority of any kind, starts pushing people around or impinging on any liberties with their decrees, the people have a perfect right to tear down that power structure and build a better one based on love and total freedom."

How do you feel about that? Do you yearn to expel the guy who posted it? Does it make you restless - itching to throw the book at its writer? I don't at all quarrel with whatever intellectual disagreement you may have with the sentimentsexpressed. How do you feel about the four letter words the University of Wisconsin's Daily Cardinal printed? Or more importantly, for it doesn't matter what you think of obscenities, would you have felt it necessary to respond, as did Wisconsin's Regents to the situation with overwhelming power? If you do, you may go the way of Grayson Kirk and David Truman - Kirk to an early retirement and Truman, despite a lifetime of service to Columbia to a mere girls' school, Mt. Holyoke.

I do not mean at all that administrators should never be firm and decisive. What I do intend to emphasize is that any use of unilateral power, no matter how justified it may seem to those who wield it, risks arousing destructive forces far

greater than the presumed evils it may seek to control. I urge instead that the entire educational community in a particular institution - faculty, students and administration - have a hand in formulating policy and in developing the common values and shared understandings which make firm action politically viable. Or, to put it another way ther is a real drive for participatory democracy in our society and the sensible administrator, it seems to me, must nourish the involvement of the total community he serves if he is not to invite chaos.

The real field for <u>decisive</u> administrative action, I believe, is in encouraging the participative structures and the institutional climate which advance the sense of cohesiveness in a school or college. Such action is exhausting, requires vastly increased administrative support staffs, and necessitates more humane and more humble administrative attitudes. I'm not advocating mere student power or faculty power or any grcup power but the drive and force which derive from tandem effort.

We need also to seek teaching arrangements which have a chance of restoring the sense of intimacy and of shared purpose which, at least if we believe in an idyllic past, once characterized college classes. One approach is to encourage short-term institutes or seminars (perhaps six weeks in length) which put students and faculty together for intensive inquiry and learning experiences. Such institutes should be interdisciplinary, problem-rather than discipline-oriented, introspective and self-evaluative and, whenever appropriate, provide opportunities for action applications in the real world. The idea would be to allow the student alternating periods for instruction and independent study and, for the faculty alternate periods for intensive teaching and the freedom for study, research and consulting which conditions in modern society demand. There isn't sufficient time to describe such a plan in detail, but I hope you see the reform direction it attempt to illustrate. The major point is that smug acceptance of our present ancient arrangements for instruction can no longer suffice.

But the most important of suggestions to you, if you would be bastions against chaos in your educational institutions, is to resolve that obvious irrationalities, wild spirits, and obscenities will no blind you to the idealism and hope for the future which underlie much of the current student unrest. Despite the graffiti and the manifestos tacked on the men's rooms' walls, there is great zest and an exhilerating sense of social purpose in the student rebellions which I have known. At least that is the way things were at Columbia in the spring and fall of 1968.

Thank you very much for listening.